

keep being told, it's not about

what

it's about; we are not supposed to talk about [REDACTED] after all, its not about [REDACTED] anyway; the problem

is not [REDACTED] it's not about what it's about; people are the problem; it's about health, it's about educa-

tion, it's about parenting, it's about society, it's about anything besides what its about. [REDACTED] are not the

problem, but 13 from Columbine and 27 from Newtown and 49 from Orlando and 58 from Las Vegas and 17

from Parkland do not have the chance to weigh in on what the problem is or is not, because their lives

were taken. Taken by [REDACTED]. It's not about what it's about; teachers and students and sons and

daughters and brothers and sisters; friends, lovers, acquaint-

tances, neighbors, strangers, it's

not about what it's about; I,

for one, don't believe it; I,

for one, am ready to talk

about what it's about,

because it is about what

it's about. IT IS ABOUT

WHAT IT'S ABOUT and it is

about [REDACTED] and the prob-

lem is [REDACTED] and we need to

talk about [REDACTED] and it

needs to change. Your right to

own a [REDACTED] does not trump

your child's right to live.

You put on makeup tonight, because maybe in the back of your mind you wanted him to tell you “you look pretty”. You haven’t seen him since last winter; since the last time he kissed you, and you let him, because it was New Years Eve, after all, and you had a few too many drinks and you let him take off your tights because that’s what he wanted and you wanted to be wanted so you let him;

it’s summer now, and you are with someone else, someone better than him, but you still put on makeup tonight and you still came to the party where you knew he would be and you drank a little too much and you flirted a little too, you have to admit, and maybe you held on a little too long when you hugged him and maybe your eyes were telling him it was okay and it wasn’t okay

it wasn’t okay

but you didn’t say no when he laid on the couch with you and you didn’t push him away when he wrapped his much stronger, toned arms around your much smaller, soft frame

and you didn’t yell when he started to pull down your pants and you didn’t tell him to stop when he turned your face to his and kissed you; you pretended to be asleep and you let your mouth go limp and your body went rigid but you still let him touch you until he gave up and you went to sleep

and you woke up in the morning and you didn’t tell anyone and you convinced yourself it was okay and you could have said something but you didn’t so now you can’t complain and you can’t act differently and you can’t say you’re the victim because you encouraged him and you could have stopped it but you didn’t  
and you  
and you  
and you  
and you  
and now I know it wasn’t me.

It was you.

It was you who bribed me with candy to let you sneak into my  
basement one night and coerced my lips to meet yours  
We were seventeen  
You had a girlfriend  
We were best friends  
I had a crush

It was you who pretended not to know me every day at school  
after she found out what you did  
We were eighteen  
You told her it was nothing  
We only spoke in safe places  
I told you it was wrong

It was you who seduced me with your charm and an entire bottle  
of liquor the night we reunited  
We were nineteen  
You forced yourself on me  
We were on your sister's bedroom floor  
I forced the bile back down my throat

It was you who wouldn't take no for an answer, the summer after  
we hadn't spoken in awhile  
We were twenty  
You knew I wasn't interested  
We laid on the couch together  
I knew this was the last time

It was you who did the hurting  
It was you who did the wrong  
It was you who ruined me  
It was you who got away with it

It was me who never told.